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Omar Again

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Omar Again

By A. J. ARBERRY

THERE'S never two without a third, they say. So I might have guessed, after being twice unsuspectingly drawn into this Omar business, that presently I should be bothered again. But I didn't guess ; and so it was a surprise, and I suppose as a pretender to scholarship I ought to say a pleasant surprise, when last fall (my transatlanticism is not without justification) I received a letter from Professor Arthur Upham Pope asking me if I would like to have a look at yet another ancient codex of Omar that had turned up, this time in New York. I fell ; and these notes are the first fruits of that transdigression. I don't know yet who owns the thing ; it flew the Atlantic twice to my knowledge ; where its present resting place may be I cannot imagine.

Or if in Balkh or Nishapur . . .

Perhaps, it could be, Chicago.

It is a little, nice sort of manuscript, easy to slip into the pocket, pretty to pick out and read. It begins with a selection from Mu'izzī. The front flyleaf has a seal that says Ḍiyā' al-Shu'arā' Muḥammad Bāqir, 1322, and another one reading 'Abd Allāh 1104 Muḥammad Bāqir Ḥusain al-Ḥusainī. The latter must have been engraved long before the book came to that owner, because Muḥammad Bāqir ibn Muḥammad Ḥusain al-Ḥusainī inscribed in Rajab 1130 that it had just entered his possession (*dakhala fī naubatī* is how he modestly puts it) by inheritance. 'Abd al-Razzāq ibn Muḥammad Mu'in had his turn of it later in the century, for his laconic seal's date is 1175.

The title of NY (my provisional indication for this newly discovered manuscript of Omar) is as follows :—

من كلام حكيم عمر خيام
نیشابوری

The title of C (the Cambridge codex, so far unpublished, the basis of my verse translation that came out in spring, 1952) is :—

من كلام
حكيم عمر الحيماني النيسابوري
عليه الرحمة

The beginning of NY is :—

بنام خداوند بخشنده

That is precisely how C starts.

NY contains 247 quatrains, arranged four to the page, one (78, 120) occurring twice in slightly different forms. Of these 247, no fewer than 245 are also

present in C, and all 172 of ACB (Mr. Chester Beatty's copy, which I published in 1949) are there. The two odd items in NY are :—

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آن قصر کی بر جرخ همیزد بهلو
بر درکه او شہان نہادندی رو
دیدم کی بر کنکرہ اش فاختہ
بنشستہ ہمی گفت کی کو کو کو کو

This is identical (for those who know my cyphers) with Chr 115 F 149 N 350 R 257 W 392.

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انی کی دم مسیح یارت شذہ است
بخشیدن جان ہمیشہ کارت شدہ است
جان بخشش تست کی فدای تو کنم
ہم کوہر کنج تو عارت شدہ است

This is the same as R¹ 19. The partly unpointed word عارت stands for بغارت. The colophon of NY runs thus.

ببارکی اشعار حکیم عمر خیامی نیشابوری بایان رسید
اگر طغیان قلمی یا سہوی در عبارت یا در مفہوم در
نظر اید معذور باید داشت چون بر سیل ارتجال در حال
استعجال اتفاق تحریر افتاد در شہر ربیع البانی سنہ ثلث عشر
وستمائہ العبد المذنب امین الدین علی الصوفی
المرغابی عنی عنہ بحق محمد والہ الطاہرین
المعصومین

That, for the benefit of any reader who may be deficient in Persian, states the manuscript was compiled in Rabī' ii 613 (July–August, 1216) by Amīn al-Dīn 'Alī al-Šūfī al-Marghābī. Marghab, as Yāqūt, *Mu'jam al-buldān* viii 26 (Cairo edition) informs us, is the name of a village of Herat and also of a village of Malin; it is also the name of a river near Merv, and of a river at Basra. With such an *embarras de choix* one would be inclined to prefer Merv, if a man could be called after a river, because that is nearest to Nishapur; but I suspect it was the Herati village that gave Amīn al-Dīn the unknown Šūfī birth.

There is something rather odd about that colophon, though it looks innocent enough at first glance. It is only when you look at the final colophon of C, summing up the whole anthology contained in that precious manuscript, that you remember what you were thinking of.

جون آنج در صدر کتاب وعده داده بودیم از منتخبات شعرا بر سیل اجمال
 بتقدیم رسید کتاب را برین اشعار استاذ الشعرا حکیم ازرقی هروی رحمه الله
 ختم کنیم اکو طغیان قلمی یا خللی در عبارت یا در مفهوم یا سهوی
 در نظر آید معذور باید داشت کی بر سیل ارتجال در حال استعجال
 اتفاق تحریر افتاد ایزد سبحانه و تعالی آنج مقتضای ثبات و نظام
 و مستدعی حصول مرام بود ارزانی دارا زانه اللطیف المحیب
 در شهر رجب لسنة اربع و ست مائه العبد المذنب
 غیاث الدین محمد بن یوسف بن علی عفا الله عنه
 بحق محمد وآله الطاهیرین المعصومین

Coincidence ? Two minds thinking alike ? Hardly ; the correspondences are too close ; and colophons of Persian manuscripts of that period are not so stereotyped as all that. No ; either the whole thing is phoney, which I am reluctant to believe on the palæographical evidence ; or Amīn al-Dīn copied Ghiyāth al-Dīn's phrases because he liked them, or was too stupid or lazy to think of another formula ; or else the pair of them imitated a common source.

A common source ? Yes, that might explain the two odd quatrains out.

Well, a lot may be learned from figures, though they are sometimes decried by politicians, and how right they are. So here is a table showing the order of the quatrains in NY, with the corresponding items in C and ACB.

NY	C	ACB	NY	C	ACB	NY	C	ACB
1	182	144	30	161	125	59	180	122
2	145	100	31	162	126	60	158	—
3	13	110	32	163	127	61	54	29
4	15	112	33	164	—	62	55	30
5	21	—	34	165	128	63	56	31
6	22	4	35	166	129	64	57	32
7	18	—	36	167	130	65	58	—
8	175	118	37	30	14	66	59	—
9	157	123	38	31	15	67	60	33
10	160	124	39	32	16	68	61	—
11	176	119	40	33	18	69	252	41
12	172	115	41	34	17	70	70	42
13	185	147	42	35	19	71	71	43
14	186	148	43	36	—	72	72	—
15	187	—	44	37	20	73	73	—
16	188	—	45	38	21	74	74	44
17	205	150	46	39	—	75	75	—
18	206	151	47	40	22	76	77	—
19	207	—	48	41	23	77	62	34
20	208	152	49	42	24	78	63	35
21	209	153	50	43	—	79	64	—
22	210	—	51	44	25	80	65	36
23	211	154	52	45	26	81	66	37
24	212	155	53	17	114	82	67	38
25	213	—	54	173	116	83	68	39
26	214	156	55	174	117	84	69	40
27	215	157	56	177	120	85	78	45
28	216	—	57	178	—	86	79	46
29	159	169	58	179	121	87	80	47

NY	C	ACB	NY	C	ACB	NY	C	ACB
88	81	—	142	136	92	196	117	77
89	82	48	143	137	93	197	168	131
90	83	49	144	138	94	198	193	132
91	84	50	145	139	95	199	194	133
92	85	51	146	—	—	200	195	134
93	225	—	147	140	—	201	196	135
94	226	161	148	141	96	202	197	136
95	227	—	149	46	—	203	198	137
96	228	162	150	47	—	204	199	138
97	229	163	151	48	—	205	189	149
98	230	—	152	49	27	206	190	—
99	231	164	153	50	—	207	191	—
100	232	—	154	51	28	208	192	—
101	200	139	155	52	—	209	11	108
102	201	140	156	53	29	210	12	109
103	202	141	157	241	166	211	14	111
104	203	142	158	242	—	212	16	113
105	204	—	159	243	—	213	86	52
106	181	143	160	244	—	214	87	1
107	183	145	161	245	—	215	88	53
108	184	146	162	246	—	216	89	54
109	217	158	163	247	—	217	90	2
110	218	—	164	248	—	218	91	55
111	219	—	165	102	66	219	92	56
112	220	—	166	103	67	220	93	57
113	221	—	167	104	—	221	118	—
114	222	159	168	105	68	222	119	78
115	223	160	169	106	—	223	120	79
116	224	—	170	107	69	224	121	80
117	249	167	171	108	—	225	122	—
118	250	168	172	109	70	226	124	82
119	251	—	173	94	58	227	125	83
120	63	35	174	95	59	228	126	84
121	—	—	175	96	60	229	142	97
122	2	—	176	97	61	230	143	98
123	19	3	177	98	62	231	144	99
124	3	5	178	99	63	232	146	101
125	20	6	179	100	64	233	147	102
126	23	7	180	101	65	234	148	103
127	24	8	181	233	—	235	149	104
128	25	9	182	234	—	236	150	105
129	26	10	183	235	165	237	151	106
130	27	11	184	236	—	238	152	107
131	28	12	185	237	—	239	153	—
132	29	13	186	238	—	240	154	—
133	127	85	187	239	—	241	155	—
134	128	86	188	240	—	242	156	—
135	129	87	189	110	71	243	169	—
136	130	88	190	111	72	244	170	170
137	131	89	191	112	73	245	171	171
138	132	—	192	113	74	246	76	172
139	133	90	193	114	75	247	123	81
140	134	—	194	115	—			
141	135	91	195	116	76			

Curious, isn't it? I have looked at these figures this way and that, and made other comparative tables, but after a time the more I look at them the dizzier I get; that's what always happens with me and statistics. But certain things stand out a mile. First, of course, there is no shadow of doubt that C, NY, and ACB belong to the same family. Secondly, all of the 8 quatrains not found in NY (as compared with C) fall within the first 10 quatrains of C. From this I conclude speculatively that C and NY were transcribed independently of each other from a common source, and that that common source (X)

was written 4 quatrains to the page (8 to the folio) ; also that X lost one folio between the years 604 and 613. The quatrains C 2 = NY 122 and C 3 = NY 124 were promoted by the copyist of C out of their original order in X so as to give an artistic beginning to his selection, in the same way that C 252 = NY 69 was relegated to give an artistic close. It might be possible to reconstruct the order of X, following the numeration of NY and assuming that X contained 254 quatrains in 32 folios, or 4 *kurrāsas*.

i-viii, 121-5, 5-6, 126-132, 37-52, 149-156, 61-8, 77-84, 69-76, 85-92, 213-220, 173-180, 165-172, 189-196, 221-8, 133-148, 229-231, 2, 232-243, 209-210, 3, 211, 4, 212, 53, 12, 54-5, 7-8, 11, 56-9, 9, 60, 10, 29-36, 197-204, 101-5, 1, 106-8, 13-16, 205-8, 17-28, 109-116, 93-100, 181-8, 157-164, 117-19, 244-7.

The writing of NY ? Old Persian naskh, very like that of ACB but more consistently archaic, as might be expected of a manuscript compiled near the beginning, and not the middle, of the 13th century. The spelling shows the usual ancient features. There is one distinct eccentricity in NY 79, where قافله is spelt غافله, presumably establishing that already as early as 1216, at all events in the province where Amīn al-Dīn, the Sūfī of Marghab, lived, there was no noticeable difference of pronunciation between غ and ق.

Variants ? Yes, there are a number as collated with C ; and it is noteworthy that nearly all these variants accord with ACB, where the corresponding quatrain is found in ACB. Though C is not yet published, presumably it will be some day ; and so here I have given the NY variants checked against the order in C, and counterchecked against ACB.

- C 19³ کروکان بنهد NY 123 = ACB 3 کروکان بنهد
 C 20³ زلف یار بر باد NY 125 زلف خویش بر باد ACB 6 زلف یار بر باد
 C 26³ = ACB 10 چشم NY 129 چشم (mg. corr. کوشم)
 C 35³ = ACB 19 وجود NY 42 وجود [sic]
 C 36⁴ مانی و نی من NY 43 مانی نی من (not in ACB)
 C 38² ده NY 45 = ACB 21 ده
 C 43⁴ ذکر دم نریم NY 50 ذکر دم نریم (not in ACB)
 C 45³ تنهیم NY 52 = ACB 26 تنهیم
 C 48² جسم NY 151 جسم (not in ACB)
 C 49³ = ACB 27 فاش مساز NY 152 فاش مساز
 C 49⁴ کاهکاه NY 152 = ACB 27 کاهکاه
 C 58³ عالم NY 65 دنیا (not in ACB)
 C 59³ سحر NY 66 کاه سحر (not in ACB)
 C 63¹ = ACB 35 = NY 78 امشب می جام NY 120 غم کشته جام
 C 63² = ACB 35 = NY 78 جام NY 120 رطل جام

- داد NY 78 گفت = ACB 35 = NY 120 C 63³
 C 64¹ غافله NY 79 غافله [sic] (not in ACB)
 می خور NY 81 = ACB 37 می خور C 66³
 شاذ NY 84 زار = ACB 40 C 69¹
 کند NY 70 = ACB 42 کشد C 70³
 من (not in ACB) NY 73 = C (first hand) ما C 73²
 بنالی NY 76 بنالی (not in ACB) C 77⁴
 نرسید NY 86 = ACB 46 نرسد C 79^{1, 2, 4}
 مل NY 90 = ACB 49 می C corr. = C 83¹
 عرب NY 176 = ACB 61 عجم C 97²
 دل NY 179 = ACB 64 رز NY 179 mg. var. = C 100⁴
 (not in ACB) NY 167 لبش NY 104¹
 منزلگاه NY 172 منزلکه = ACB 70 C 109³
 هستی NY 193 مستی = ACB 75 C 114⁴
 (not in ACB) NY 221 دمی NY 118⁴
 جرعه = ACB 82 NY 226 جرعه C 124⁴
 یکی NY 135 بجا = ACB 87 C 129²
 عرصه = ACB 89 NY 137 عرصه C 131¹
 دل = ACB 89 NY 137 دلم C 131²
 ترا = ACB 96 NY 148 ترا C 141²
 نفس NY 2 = ACB 100 دمی C 145⁴
 [sic] NY 232 محمود = ACB 101 C 146²
 بدار NY 233 بشوی = ACB 102 C 147³
 جون من رقم NY 235 رفتم جو ما = ACB 104 C 149³
 جنت NY 238 عالم = ACB 107 C 152²
 (not in ACB) NY 60 سیه روزم NY 158³
 می معشوق NY 10 می و معشوق = ACB 124 C 160³
 آنسان = ACB 127 NY 32 زانسان C 163²
 حقیقت نه کی = ACB 116 حقیقت نی کی NY 54 2nd hand C 173 حقیقتی نی C 173²
 غم و مال حسرت NY 56 غم مال و حسرت = ACB 120 C 177¹
 (not in ACB) NY 16 جراست = ACB 188⁴
 (not in ACB) NY 206 عشق = ACB 190³
 جرعه NY 202 جرعه = ACB 136 C 197²
 فراتر NY 203 فرام = ACB 137 C 198⁴
 رنک NY 204 برک = ACB 138 C 199¹

- C 199¹ = ACB 138 = NY 204 mg. در خرابی NY 204 ناصوابی
 C 201³ NY 102 = ACB 140 خم غم
 C 203¹ NY 104 = ACB 142 بی خبر بیخبر
 C 206² = ACB 151 NY 18 کی آن زانک
 C 206³ NY 18 = ACB 151 نادان دانا
 C 210² = NY 22 mg. C 210 1st hand = NY 22 جهل (not in ACB)
 C 211⁴ NY 23 = ACB 154 کنند هماره کی
 C 212² NY 24 کنه (not in ACB)
 C 225² NY 93 آمد است (not in ACB)
 C 226^{3, 4} = ACB 161 تماشاگاه NY 94 تماشاگاه
 C 229¹ NY 97 = ACB 163 بکه تر
 C 230¹ NY 98 هوشم ز شراب هوسم بشراب (not in ACB)
 C 232² NY 100 کرا نایه بر در کرا نایه بر زر (not in ACB)
 C 234¹ NY 182 موجود [sic] (not in ACB)
 C 238³ NY 186 اینسان انسان (not in ACB)
 C 240¹ NY 188 روی بوی (not in ACB)
 C 242³ NY 158 دیر دور (not in ACB)
 C 251² NY 119 خوردن دادن (not in ACB)

So now we have three very ancient copies of selections from Omar, all depending upon a common source. It is very gratifying to have reached so far. And it is a privilege and a pleasure to present these scattered notes to the author of the brilliant article on Omar in the *Encyclopædia of Islam*.
